THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. In order to formulate a long term pricing policy for petroleum products, the Government constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. C. Rangarajan, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.

The Committee was mandated to look into various aspects of pricing and taxation of petroleum products with a view to stabilizing/rationalizing their prices, keeping in view the financial position of the oil companies, the investment needed in the sector, the need to conserve petroleum products, and establishing a transparent mechanism for the autonomous adjustment of prices by the oil companies. Taking into consideration the interests of all stakeholders concerned, the Committee was to suggest a comprehensive mechanism for pricing and taxation of sensitive petroleum products, and other allied issues. The composition of the Committee is given in the enclosed Statement *(See* below). The Committee submitted its report to the Government on 17.2.2006.

Statement

The composition of the Inter-Ministerial Committee is as follows:

(i) Dr. C. Rangarajan, Chairman, Economic Advidory Council to the Prime Minister	Chairman
(ii) Dr. Kirit S. Parikh, Member, Planning Commission	Member
(iii) Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas	Member
(iv) Dr. Ashok Lahiri, Chief Economic Adviser, Ministry of Finance	Member
(v) Shri Saumitra Chaudhuri, Chief Economist, ICRA, New Delhi.	Member
(vi) Prof. B.H. Dholakia, Director, MM, Ahmedabad	Member

Illegal storage of LPG

† 257. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether the problem of shortage of LPG is due to illegal storage of LPG and oil in residential colonies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of steps taken by Government to solve the problems pertaining to LPG and oil and to check illegal storage of the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) There is no shortage of LPG in the country and LPG supplies to distributors are being made by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) as per the genuine demand of customers registered with the LPG distributors. However, a backlog of 3-4 days has been reported in major towns of Assam due to the disruption of LPG supplies on account of bandh called by United Liberation Front of Assam on 13.2.2006 and by All Assam Student Union on 14.2.2006. OMCs have not reported any illegal storage of LPG or other petroleum products in residential colonies.

Increase in refining capacity

† 258. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to increase the refinery capacity of the country to boost export;

(b) whether any action plan has been formulated in this regard, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken to implement the said action plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) The refineries sector has been delicensed since June, 1998 It is for the Board of Directors of the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) to decide the programme for increasing the refining Capacity through setting up of new refineries and expansion of existing refineries.

The public sector oil companies have proposed to set up new refineries and undertake expansion projects to increase the refining capacity, as per details given in the enclosed Statement *(See* below).

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.